



Freeway-issues deadline set

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The Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee has organized more than 100 comments and questions about the proposed South Mountain Freeway from the public.

Now it wants some answers.

On Monday, the committee set a two-month deadline for responses from various city, state and federal leaders so it can discuss the planned freeway again at its April meeting.

"These are questions that have not been answered," said Laurel Arndt, a committee member and a member of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team organized by the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Arndt has long been frustrated by ADOT's lack of answers on questions from CAT and residents, reasoning that ADOT doesn't know all the answers because the freeway's design hasn't been set.

"But some of these aren't design questions," said Arndt, adding that ADOT resists going "on the record" for fear plans will be changed and they'll be held to their original answers.

Arndt has insisted that the questions and comments be included in ADOT's draft Environmental Impact Statement, which is being prepared as required by law for the Federal Highways Administration before either agency decides whether to build the freeway.

The Maricopa Association of Governments will then decide whether to fund it.

The Village Planning Committee, which is opposed to the freeway, is sending letters to Gov. Janet Napolitano, ADOT Director Victor Mendez, Phoenix City Manager Frank Fairbanks, several state legislators and Arizona's congressional delegates.

Committee member Patrick Panetta, who drafted a letter summarizing the questions, suggested a matrix prepared by village planner Chris Hood be condensed to eliminate redundancies.